



**Labor and Public Employees Committee**

**HB 5848 An Act Concerning Women Re-entering the Workforce**

**Kim Cerullo, Public Policy Intern, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund**

**February 17, 2015**

---

My name is Kim Cerullo, a Master's of Social Work student at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and a public policy intern at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF). CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. Today, I am here on behalf of the Campaign for a Working Connecticut. The Campaign's mission is to promote the state's economic competitiveness through the development of sustainable, effective workforce solutions to increase workers' skills and advance families to self-sufficiency. The Campaign is a coalition including diverse members such as education and training providers, workforce investment boards, advocates, unions and chambers of commerce.

**On behalf of the Campaign, I encourage you to support HB 5848, An Act Concerning Women Re-entering the Workforce, and use it as a unique opportunity to reduce barriers to employment for women across the state.**

In today's workforce, vocational training and post-secondary education are becoming increasingly important for securing employment that provides sufficient wages. Across Connecticut, additional training or certification is required by a growing number of professions and approximately 66% of jobs created by 2018 will require at least some post-secondary education.<sup>1</sup> However, not all jobs requiring post-secondary education demand a four-year degree. These occupations, typically referred to as "middle-skill" jobs, require training beyond high school. This training may come in the form of an occupational certificate, such as a technology skills or Microsoft Specialist certificate.

**By supporting technology training for women re-entering the workforce, HB 5848 could help fill positions that are being created in Connecticut and support the state's economic growth in a practical and sustainable way.**

The Campaign has met with students in adult education and training programs, and the women in these programs confirm time and time again that technology training increased their employability, and was a vital step in their career search. Chastity, a personal care assistant,

found it hard to advance her career and become a medical assistant because of her lack of basic technology skills. Now that she is a trained Microsoft Office Specialist, she will be able to make that step forward. Michelle, a mother of two trying to re-enter the workforce, said that IBEST technology skills program at EASTCONN was “a huge opportunity to add valuable, transferable IT skills to [her] repertoire.”

A skills training program specifically aimed at women re-entering the workforce, and developed jointly by the Department of Labor and the state’s workforce investment boards, would help women across the state better provide for their families. It would also be an important contributor to economic growth and sustainability in Connecticut. On behalf of the Campaign for a Working Connecticut, I encourage you to focus on investing in Connecticut’s female workforce through HB 5848 by providing them with the programs and skills they need to fill the available positions.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to present this testimony. For more information about the Campaign for a Working Connecticut, please visit our website <http://www.cwealf.org/cwct/>.

---